



Conservation Practice Overview

July 2021

Sinkhole Treatment (Code 527)

Sinkhole treatment is the management of naturally occurring sinkholes to reduce contamination of groundwater and surface water resources and reduce soil erosion through the establishment of vegetative buffers, fencing, and control of surface waters. Filtering the water entering the sinkhole or plugging the sinkhole are also activities used in the management of sinkholes.



Practice Information

This practice is applied on any land where the soils and geologic conditions have led to the development of sinkholes. The primary purpose of sinkhole area treatment is to improve ground and surface water quality, conserve soil and surface water resources, and/or improve farm safety. A geologic investigation of the potential impacts of the treatment on groundwater, surface water, and the karst features is required.

This practice will include removing trash and other materials from the sinkhole, establishing vegetative buffers, fencing the sinkhole and buffer area, developing nutrient and pest management plans for the drainage area, and may include installing a filter or plug in the sinkhole when an open sinkhole poses a safety hazard.

Other considerations are the diversion of excess surface waters, use of appropriate erosion and sedimentation control measures, and changes to the volume of surface water, which may disturb underground hydrology.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Sinkhole Treatment (Code 527) is commonly applied with other conservation practices such as NRCS CPSs Fence (Code 382), Use Exclusion (Code 472), Diversion (Code 362), and Filter Strip (Code 393).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.